

**PARTNERS FOR YOUTH CAREER PATHWAYS ROUND 7 YOUTH DEI
ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING REPORT
GRANTEE: CENTRAL MINNESOTA JOBS AND TRAINING SERVICES
(CMJTS)**

DATE AND LOCATION: April 19, 2018 – Monticello, MN

STAFF INTERVIEWED: Leslie Wojtowicz, Development Manager
Tera Brooks, Disability Resource Coordinator
Amber Sixberry, Employment Specialist

DEED STAFF: Cory Schmid – DEI Project Lead, Employment and Training Programs

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING REPORT

The purpose of this onsite technical assistance visit was to conduct a review of CMJTS' Disability Employment Initiative Project, to ensure compliance with state and federal rules, regulations, and statutes. The Minnesota Youth Disability Employment Initiative On-site Technical Assistance Guide, March 2018, served as the basis for discussions.

The categories reviewed were *Outreach, Access and Referrals, Program Implementation, and On-Site Documentation Review*. The on-site review, conducted on, April 19, 2018. All backup documentation and notes are on file at the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Employment and Training Program in St. Paul, Minnesota.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

PROJECT EXPENDITURES

Grant Amount: \$495,000

Grant Number: 7059600

Need for Technical Assistance/Corrective Action: None.

Expenditure Levels as of March 31, 2018: \$212,507.26 or 46% of funds are expended.

BUDGET

The grantee has expended 46% as of March 31, 2018. As of March 31, 2018, the breakdown of the budget, with Cost Category titles are as follows: Administration \$33,719.71, Personnel \$121,361, Fringe Benefits \$41,982.67, Travel \$1,439.89, Equipment/Supplies \$731.11, and Youth Wage and Fringe \$13,272.58.

REPORTING

The grantee has provided complete and timely monthly financial reports along with quarterly narrative reports. CMJTS has also included success stories from DEI participants.

CONCERNS/CORRECTIVE ACTION

The only concern discussed was the number of participants enrolled in the DEI project. The DEI Project Lead and CMJTS staff were aware of this issue prior to the on-site visit. The number of enrollments are lower than expected at this point in the grant which is largely due to staff turnover in fall of 2017. New staff have since been hired and they are currently completing training. CMJTS has a plan in place to increase enrollments. CMJTS showed the DEI State Lead a list of participants that will be enrolled in quarter two of 2018.

PROJECT GOALS, PERFORMANCE, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

The overarching goal of serving 100 youth with disabilities who have an additional ‘at-risk’ factor is the priority for CMJTS. There are 24 participants currently enrolled in the DEI project. Of those 24, 8 have been termed while 6 have entered unsubsidized employment after exit. Recruitment of additional youth is not an issue for staff at CMJTS. Staff will continue to work with ABE, VRS, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and community-based organizations like Tri-CAP for referrals. CMJTS also partners with the Wright Technical Center where there are opportunities for youth apprenticeships.¹

Youth participants have the opportunity to attend a variety of business and college tours. One such tour that is popular among staff and students is the Construct Tomorrow program.² Construct Tomorrow is supported by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, apprenticeship coordinators, prime and sub-contractors, and local educators. This program provides students with information about apprenticeship career training and other career opportunities in the construction industry. Students can also partake in hands-on experiences. For example, students can try simple welds to see if welding might be a career they are interested in pursuing. Construct Tomorrow also provides students with the opportunity to meet with employers and union representatives.

Youth are supported by counselors in multiple ways. Youth counselors will work with the youth to schedule an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meeting if the youth does not already have an Individual Education Program (IEP) team in place through the school. DEI staff also noted that positive family involvement is a strong indicator that the youth will successfully exit the DEI program. Family involvement for the youth in the CMJTS DEI project includes parents, siblings, and boyfriend/girlfriend. CMJTS staff noted that, it

¹ Wright Technical Center is a high school for technical and alternative education.

² For more information see: http://www.dli.mn.gov/appr/construct_tomorrow.asp.

helps if parents/families are involved with the youth's career planning from the beginning. Staff stated that many parents/families have express gratitude for the IRT meetings as well because parents/families are often overwhelmed by the number of individuals supporting their child. However, staff noted that some parents/families hinder the youth's success for various reasons, and in these rare instances, counselors may try to downplay the role parents play in the services provided to their child. Incentives for youth are used by CMJTS, but CMJTS does not utilize DEI funds for incentives. Youth staff provide Walmart gift cards to youth participants as the youth successfully completes goals outlined in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS) or IEP.

Leadership is integrated into the services provided to youth in the DEI project. Leadership activities are tracked in the participant's ISS or IEP. For youth with disabilities, there is an emphasis placed on self-advocacy skills. In turn, youth counselors ask that youth participants lead their IRT meeting. This allows the youth to gain leadership skills while also building their self-advocacy skills. Youth-led IRTs ensure that the meeting is focused on the wants and needs of the youth participant. In-school Youth often gain leadership skills through school-sanctioned sports and activities. Additionally, youth participants may gain leadership skills through their work experience placement, depending on the nature of the work. Youth counselors are also able to leverage the Pre-ETS curriculum developed by CMJTS when working with youth on leadership development.

Youth counselors utilize various online career exploration and planning assessments including: MN Careers, O*Net, Career OneStop. Youth counselors will pair the online assessment results with Labor Market Information outputted by DEED. In doing so, youth gain a better understanding of what careers are in-demand which can inform future career goals of participants. Also, youth counselors partner with business service staff and use the career assessment results to help identify appropriate work experience or OJT placements for the participant. Depending on the business and youth performance, youth may be hired on by business after the work experience or OJT has ended. See the participant interview at the end of this report for an example of a participant hired on by an employer after the end of an OJT experience.

To date, 25% of youth in the DEI project have earned industry recognized credentials. Three of the certifications that were earned by participants were Personal Care Attendant (PCA) certifications. Minnesota has a significant shortage of PCAs in the state. Minnesota's Governor's Workforce Development Board and the Department of Human Services are addressing this issue in Minnesota's Olmstead plan. Through these efforts, Workforce Development Areas, like CMJTS have been encouraged to work with youth participants (at least 18 years of age) who are interested in healthcare and human services pathways to complete training for the PCA certification. The shortage of PCAs allows youth participants to quickly secure a job with a wage above Minnesota's minimum wage. Other participants in the DEI project have earned their high school diploma and completed post-secondary training. CMJTS currently offers the OSHA 10 and the Retail Federation Customer Services certifications in-house. Soon,

through another grant opportunity, CMJTS will offer a Hospitality Guest Service Gold Credential in-house.

Oftentimes, support services are provided to participants enrolled in DEI. Some examples of support services that have been provided include: gas cards, personal hygiene products, shoes, school supplies, and winter clothes. Staff noted that 10 youth have expressed interest in obtaining their driver's license. DEI funds are not used for support services.

In order to better engage with and serve communities of color, CMJTS has placed an emphasis on multicultural in-service trainings for staff. CMJTS is actively seeking to diversify staff in order to better engage with communities of color. Other grant opportunities that target communities of color are being leveraged to increase the number of youth of color who receive services through the WorkForce Centers. Additionally, CMJTS is utilizing the expertise of PACER Center staff to engage with parents and families of color.

DEI staff noted that all youth counselors, participants, and worksite supervisors are trained in OSHA safety training, as well as relevant child labor laws, hazardous occupations, minimum wage laws, and the Right to Know Act. This is documented in the orientation packet for youth and supervisors while it is documented in personnel files for CMJTS staff. Additional safety trainings may be conducted by the worksite staff to ensure that industry safety standards are understood by participants.

With regards to data collection, CMJTS has Quality Assurance staff who verify the information inputted for each of the enrolled participants. The only challenges that staff reported relating to data collection is that youth do not always return signed documents in a timely fashion and during the summer, school staff are slow to respond to requests.

WORKSITE DEVELOPMENT

Grievances, discrimination complaints, accident reports: No grievances, accidents or discrimination complaints were filed during the grant period.

Participant orientation and safety training:

As part of the worksite orientation, participants were given appropriate worksite training and safety training. Additional safety training is handled at each worksite by employees at the business. This ensures that DEI participants understand industry specific safety procedures that are relevant to the worksite.

PARTICIPANT FILE REVIEW

Ten randomly selected files were reviewed. The files were reviewed for the fourteen compliance items and for proper storage of documents. All files contained the following:

- Enrollment Date
- Birth Date (Copy)

- Proof of Citizenship
- Proof of Right-to-Work, if applicable
- Selective Service (copy-for males age 18+ born after 12/31/1959)
- Social Security Number (Copy)
- Veteran Status (DD214), if applicable
- Low-income status or history of intergenerational poverty
- Parental participation consent form, for minors
- Emergency contact person and phone number(s)
- Address and telephone number

The organization's files were in order and had the required and pertinent information.

Exemplary Sites, Best Practices/Good News Stories

DEI staff noted that providing real world experiences, such as work experiences drastically increased the effectiveness of transition for the participant. These real world experiences allow youth to gain important employability skills, earn wages to support themselves and their families, as well as to build confidence, self-advocacy, and self-efficacy skills.

Staff are co-enrolling participants as necessary to ensure that the services the participants need are provided. Currently, 16 youth are co-enrolled in the Minnesota Youth Program, 10 are co-enrolled in WIOA Youth. In addition, some participants are also co-enrolled in the Pre-ETS project and the TANF Innovation project. Recently, CMJTS secured a retail-focused grant and staff anticipate there will be participants who can be co-enrolled into the DEI project.

Communication between the youth counselor and students is often via text message or email. Staff have thoroughly documented these interactions with participants in case notes. Staff noted that text and email are the preferred method of contact for most youth participants. Communication with worksite supervisors is also well document in case notes.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW

What is your name: Wyatt

What activities are you participating in through this program: I was working at a different shop before this one. I liked that place, but I was not fast enough, and I learned I need to improve my dexterity skills. Amber helped me get this job at the car wash [Wyatt's job started as an OJT and he was eventually hired on by the company].

How did you find out about this program: I found out about this program through the Wright Technical Center. I learned basic auto mechanic skills there and my teacher recommended I work with Amber to help build my skills and find a job.

What did you like/dislike about this program: I like that I am able to work. I really enjoy helping people at the car wash. I also like to do oil changes for people's cars. I like that I can stay here at the shop and learn more and eventually become a Mechanic 1. Amber has helped me with my communications skills a lot.

What are your plans for school and/or work: To eventually work my way up to a Mechanic 1. I can learn how to do that at my current job and I hope to start learning those tasks soon.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

CMJTS staff did not identify any challenges with implementing the DEI project. They did note however that there would be more co-enrollments with WIOA Youth if WIOA allowed for more incremental success points for youth with disabilities. Staff stated that some DEI participants are working limited hours because that is all they want or need to work.

REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

At this time, there is no request for technical assistance. The staff would like to participate in activities like the tour of Blind Inc. The DEI State Lead will continue to identify opportunities for professional development.